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GLOBALIZATION, POVERTY, TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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Through new lenses

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A human face

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UNEP

From the desk of

KLAUS TOEPFER
United Nations
Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director,
UNEP

A FEW MONTHS AGO UNEP's headquarters hosted delegates to the 4th International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests. These are among the most vulnerable and poorest people in the world. One of their growing concerns centres on the spread of infrastructure, the growth of mining, dams, and road-building in their communities – and the social and cultural forces that come in their wake.

They are calling for cultural damage or impact assessments similar to the environmental impact assessments already commonplace for big development schemes. I believe UNEP's Governing Council, and its ministers and representatives, should heed this plea, listen and consider the merits of assessing cultural damage.

Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity matters. There are demonstrable links between it and biodiversity. I sincerely believe that it matters even more in a globalized world. Culture gives people their roots, and roots provide stability in the face of rapid change.

Cultural diversity also means 'ideas diversity'. And without a diversity of ideas, without the ability to look at environmental and developmental challenges in fresh and new ways, humankind will always be fighting with one hand tied behind its back.

Giving indigenous people and local farmers a better economic chance is one, key, positive way of promoting cultural diversity.

You may never have heard of 'Jeevani', but in the multi-billion dollar business of health and sports supplements, this anti-fatigue, anti-stress, drink could soon be adorning the world's locker rooms as the next wonder tonic.

It was discovered in Kerala, India, when a team of scientists on a botanical collecting expedition were astonished to find that their guides, from the local Kani tribe, were perky and wide awake when they themselves were tired and fatigued after a hard day in the field.

The guides were constantly munching black fruits. When offered some, the scientists immediately felt charged and full of energy. The Kani initially demurred over showing them the source of the fruit – a forest plant called *arogyapaacha*.

Twelve active compounds have been isolated from it – some with anti-fatigue properties, others with disease-fighting potential. The scientists have licensed two companies to exploit their possibilities, and a trust fund has been set up to plough some of the profits back to the Kani. We will have to wait and see if this arrangement works – if, as the jargon goes, there has been real and sustainable benefit-sharing. But it is an attempt – in an area of environment and trade which all too often has been one-way traffic, benefiting the companies and collectors rather than the conservers who have nurtured genetic diversity for centuries.

Jeevani is one of several cases assembled by the World International Property Organization (WIPO) and UNEP to try and shed light on this complex but hugely important area.

Globalization and trade have the potential for great good and for reducing poverty, not least when they give local and indigenous people economic incentives for preserving the plants and animals which they have conserved for centuries.

The issue of access and benefit-sharing is explicitly referred to in the 11-year-old Convention on Biological Diversity – in Article 8 (j), to be precise. But, as is made clear by some of the WIPO/UNEP case studies, it is all too often not working – or working too imperfectly.

Sadly the genetic resources of one country or community are often treated as a public common good, owned by nobody, free for all, without property rights.

Setting rules

Last year, UNEP helped to broker the so-called Bonn Guidelines, which for the first time set out clear rules on how governments can balance the needs of those collecting genetic resources with those of the people who conserve and provide them.

It may be too soon to assess whether these voluntary guidelines are working, but I hope that the Governing Council can affirm a commitment to the principles of access and benefit-sharing, as well as its enthusiasm to see the guidelines work for the benefit of indigenous peoples, for the benefit of the poor ■

YOUR VIEWS

I would really like to receive your feedback on the issues raised in this edition of Our Planet. *Please either e-mail feedback@ourplanet.com or write to:*
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Looking through NEW LENSES

ABDOULAYE WADE calls for a more systematic linkage of poverty reduction and environmental management to bring development and ecological security

UNEP/Topham

There is an embedded tradition in economics of analysing poverty and inequality issues from the standpoint of lack of income and its distribution. This approach has its analytical validity. However, it is essential to recognize that – when we deal with the questions of poverty, the environment and sustainable development – other important elements should be incorporated in the analysis and not be treated as marginal. Issues related to freedoms – such as access, or the lack of it, to resources and basic services and amenities such as health and education – and to social opportunities, should be as central as income to the analysis on poverty reduction and development. This multi-layered approach is essential if we are to deal constructively and efficiently with the thorny and difficult questions regarding poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Powerful idea

The 1972 Stockholm United Nations Conference on the Human Environment first put forward the problem of environmental deterioration. The 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, brought the idea of sustainable development to the fore. This concept has since gained significant momentum and popularity and has been through at least two major summits, in Rio in 1992 and in Johannesburg last year.

Poverty eradication and the concept of sustainable development both present great challenges – one in achieving coveted and needed relief for all the 1.4 billion poor on Earth, and the other in putting into practice the powerful general idea behind it. I would like to touch upon the problems facing less developed countries (LDCs), particularly African ones. The latest United Nations LDC report has suggested their problems go above and beyond the traditional – or should I say classical – low-level equilibrium trap models. The simple fact is that a large number of LDCs not only have to cope with economic stagnation but face an outright long-term downward spiral. If we accept this as true, as I do, it is necessary to go beyond the traditional low-level equilibrium trap analyses and adopt the multi-layered approach suggested above.

Agents of change

Money metric analysis of poverty and the classical approach to development and growth – emphasizing the need for macro-economic stability accompanied by specific remedies – have shown their limitations in the past. [The principle, ideas and goals are not erroneous, but the remedies behind them are questionable.] Sustainable development and poverty reduction have humans and human well-being at the centre of their approach. People should be seen as agents of change and should therefore be given the capabilities to create, and benefit from, opportunities for themselves. This approach, put forward by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, fits particularly well with the multi-dimensional approach to poverty and sustainable development suggested earlier, and gives us new opportunities and options to explore ways and means to move the development agenda forward.

According to UNEP's report, *Global Environment Outlook*, published in 2002, 62 per cent of Africa's population lives in rural areas and depends heavily and directly on natural ecosystems for its livelihood: about 56 per cent of Africans (some 431 million people) depend on agriculture and therefore on the vagaries of climate. Recent figures on genuine savings – an indicator that takes into account depreciation of natural capital stock – have displayed a downward trend for the LDCs in the 1990s, indicating that countries have depleted their national wealth, and that their stocks of assets are diminishing.

Nick Thomas, Bridgeman/UNEP/Topham

People should have ecological security, as well as adequate safety nets

© Stephen Tanambaum / SEP Typham

Other trends – such as declining health, rising illiteracy and endemic problems such as conflicts and lack of good governance – add to the need to move the analysis beyond just trying to 'fix the market'. We must look at appropriate ways of coping with the crisis, and design strategies that will enable us to manage physical assets and enhance human capital and skills – through capacity-building, employment opportunities and access to basic human freedoms such as water, health care and energy – and help the poor 'achieve a standard of living at least as good as our own and for us all to look after [our] next generation similarly', as Professor Sen so elegantly put it in his paper on Sustainable Development and Sustainable Freedom.

The powerful idea behind the notion of sustainable development poses a true challenge to countries both at the conceptual and implementation levels.

New partnership

When the idea of a New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) was conceived, it was designed with the goal of giving Africans a real chance to succeed by being true agents of positive change rather than mere recipients of aid, as has been the case for decades. Involving all layers of society – together with changes in the current institutions and systems – is fundamental to the success of such an endeavour. It is inconceivable nowadays, for example, to pretend to have a vibrant and productive society without having in place civil rights, the right to choose who should govern and the right to dissent – in other words, democracy in a broadest sense.

Another important element is the transparency of institutions – whether public or private – in disclosing information to all. The asymmetry of information, described by Professor Joseph Stiglitz, has been shown to be detrimental to both internal and external investors, making it difficult for a country to accumulate domestic and foreign savings as people lose confidence. Corruption, which is directly related to transparency, has plagued African countries for a long time. The cronyism and clientelism experienced by many African countries has, for example, made it virtually impossible for the poor majority to have access to finance and credit schemes reserved for small privileged groups.

Ecological security

Finally, people should have ecological security, as well as adequate social safety nets. Empirical evidence has shown that it is the poor who live in the most vulnerable areas and are mostly the victims of natural catastrophes. Ecological security will then entail schemes and incentives that will empower local populations (e.g. land rights, communal land management, and the participatory process). The strategies should involve close consultation between experts at the national level and people at the community and local levels, together with civil society.

The challenge for us all will be to truly apply what we all now know – to link poverty reduction and environmental management in a more systematic way. This will be achieved through reconsidering project designs, national development frameworks and national action plans through the new lenses of a multidimensional and participatory approach to development ■

Abdoulaye Wade is President of the Republic of Senegal.

DEVELOPMENT *with a human face*

VICENTE FOX QUESADA calls for a global pact for viable, sustainable and shared development

In this era of globalization, free exchange plays an enormously important role in the development of nations. No country that seeks economic growth and greater well-being can afford to have a policy of closed borders. The way must be kept open for exchanging goods, services and technology, and – above all – for the free flow of ideas. It is equally important to share responsibility for the well-being of planet Earth.

The days of isolation are over. This new era requires the greatest possible participation by every human being for the viable, sustainable and just development sought by all of humanity. While each country must establish its own strategies for growth and development, none can fail to realize that shared future prosperity can only be assured through the broadest international cooperation.

Mexico believes that in a world characterized by interdependence, common problems demand common solutions. The greatest challenge facing today's governments is to present a united front to address shared problems.

José E. Hernández Bringas / UNAM Fine Arts

The free flow of commerce, investment, science and technology, amongst other things, must evolve within the context of assuring truly equitable competition – in an international system free from barriers or obstacles to meeting and exchange – so that the benefits of economic growth reach everyone. As these lead to greater levels of well-being for all, not only will people be able to overcome their impoverished conditions, they will also have new opportunities for developing their talents and abilities. This in turn will help to improve the world in which we all live.

Fighting poverty

The development to which we aspire must necessarily start with a concerted fight against poverty. Economic growth achieved through pillaging the planet's natural resources – or through social exclusion – can be neither economically nor socially sustainable. Only through the broadest social participation – involving individuals, peoples and communities in economic endeavour, in protecting our environment and in improving education, health and habitation – will we able to follow the path of viable, sustainable and equitable development.

The Mexican Government has already set on track a new integral non-welfare strategy for addressing poverty within our borders. Based on joint responsibility rather than paternalism, it will offer families new opportunities to escape poverty. Through access to better education and health, and to adequate living conditions, we hope that the women and men of Mexico will be able to develop their talents and abilities for the benefit of their families, communities and country.

In Mexico we believe that it is possible to eradicate extreme poverty, to reduce social inequality and to improve society's living standards. This is an ethical and political obligation in every region of the world, particularly in the least developed countries.

The highest possible level of social participation is needed to achieve new and greater well-being. The rise of democracy and civil society's determination – in every nation – to take part in the design and implementation of government decisions are not incompatible with the challenges of globalization.

Democratization and the demand for greater social participation in the decisions that affect us all have become the central global process of our time. Yet this rise of democracy is still not apparent in multilateral institutions – particularly financial ones. The reform and strengthening of multilateral international institutions should be based on universal values that promote and defend human rights – including civil, political, economic, environmental, social and cultural ones.

Spirit of reconciliation

In the current century we will need to work creatively and with the greatest spirit of reconciliation to ensure that global issues – even the most controversial ones – are addressed in the framework of a new multilateralism that enables viable, sustainable and just development. Addressing global problems requires strengthened international cooperation to maintain focus and to avoid weakening efforts.

This demands concrete commitments not just by govern-

Economic growth achieved through pillaging the planet's natural resources can be neither economically nor socially acceptable

ments and multilateral organizations, but also by the private sector, non-governmental organizations and society in general in every nation. Governments have been able to come together at global level – with the invaluable assistance of civil environmental protection organizations – to analyse the principal environmental threats and establish concrete goals for addressing them. The greatest support – both internal and external – is needed to achieve these goals.

Various legal bodies must develop or modify laws adequate to the task of protecting the environment, but business needs the will and the financial, technical and other resources to implement them. Governments must ensure both that such laws are respected, and that the mechanisms are in place to enable the productive sector to function as 'clean industry'. In Mexico we have both fiscal and social incentives to achieve this. We also seek to ensure that industry has access to new technologies and resources through international cooperation.

Awareness and education

The contribution of individual citizens is, of course, an essential part of our objective. Greater environmental awareness and better education on matters of integrated development – implying ongoing but also sustainable economic growth – will help us to achieve higher levels of well-being while safeguarding our planet and its inhabitants.

The threat to the survival of the planet's wealth of biological diversity and of its environmental quality has provoked a concerted and increasingly societal response. Climate change, water and soil contamination, overexploitation of water and forestry resources, desertification, and the increasing loss of biodiversity – as well as growing inequality both within and between nations and the frequent violation of human rights – have forced humankind to become aware of the seriousness of these problems and to take steps towards finding solutions.

Today, sustainable and equitable development is not just an exceptional opportunity – it is the only way for humanity to go. We need development with a human face, based on the struggle against poverty. We must make a grand global pact for sustainable development and for the financing this requires.

Mexico is a signatory to the most important global conventions in the field of environment. It has also done much to implement them through enlarging its Protected Natural Areas and improving monitoring and surveillance. We have placed ourselves as a driving force in the region through our participation in global and transboundary programmes for conserving and protecting species and ecosystems. In addition we have taken concrete steps to ensure the protection of the world's biodiversity on the initiative of the Megadiverse Countries – 15 nations harbouring 70 per cent of it.

Improving conditions

The only way to protect and safeguard the world's biological diversity is to improve conditions for the indigenous and local communities who are the poorest and most marginalized peoples on the planet, even though they live in areas of great natural wealth which they have protected for thousands of years for the sake of all humanity. Governments and society must meet their responsibility to these peoples and ensure that traditional knowledge is properly recognized and valued in evaluating and granting intellectual property rights. We can no longer achieve economic growth through social exclusion and misusing natural resources.

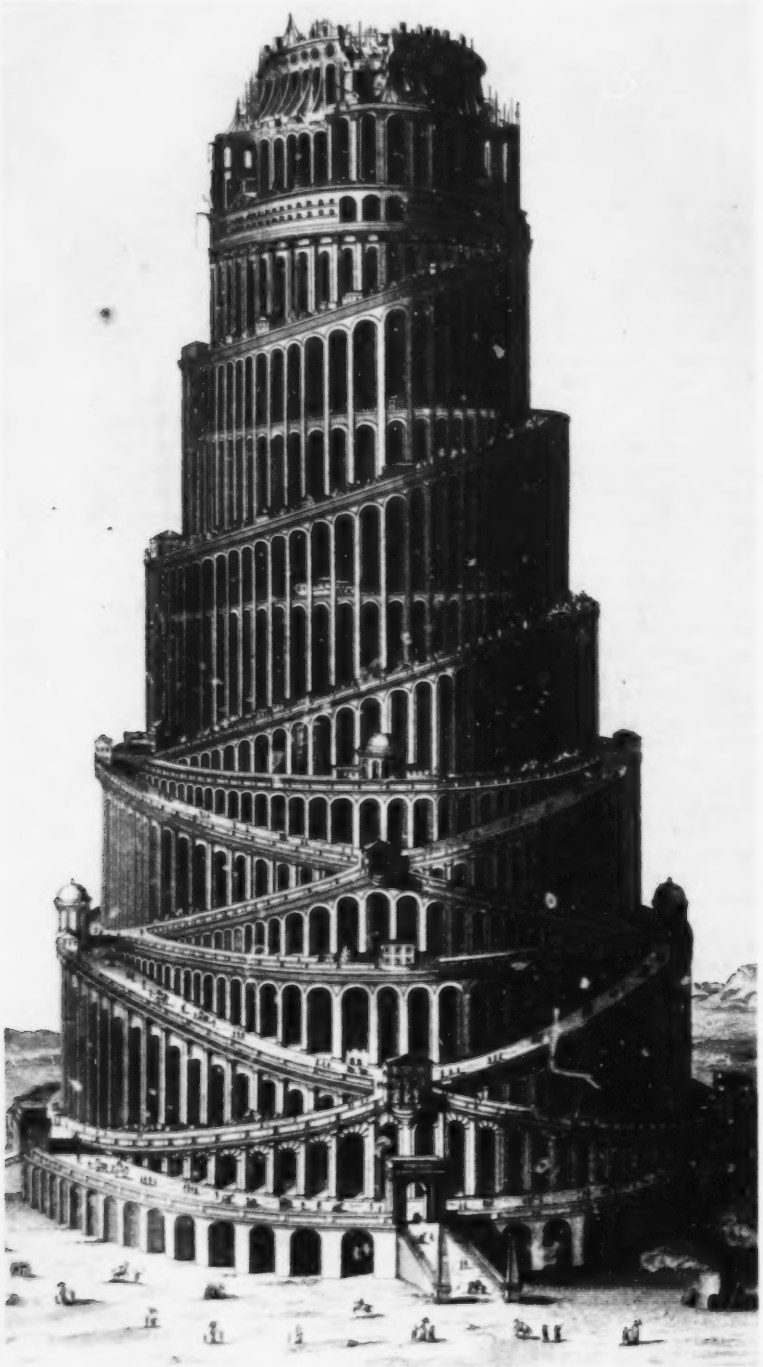
Worldwide economic stability depends on every country including the hitherto excluded sectors of society as both protagonists and beneficiaries of development. Well-being must be the most tangible and widely circulated 'product' of globalization.

We, the women and men of every nation, have a shared responsibility in building ongoing and sustainable development – and it is only right that the benefits should also be shared. Well-being that reaches everyone is the best guarantee of peace and stability for the global community of this new century ■

Vicente Fox Quesada is President of the United Mexican States

TRADE *can transform*

YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI says that fair trade is essential for sustainable development and environmental protection



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In the Biblical story, there was a place called Babel, whose people were quite advanced in knowledge and in science. They therefore decided to challenge God. 'We shall build a tower which will be so tall that we shall go and visit God through it.' They started building, but when they had gone many stories up, the tower collapsed.

Now new people are trying to build a new 'Tower of Babel' – a false edifice. Nature has engineered our globe quite well: the mountains, the rivers, lakes, wetlands, etc. If we use them well, they can sustain us for a long time; but if we try to change them without serious thought about the likely effects, to ourselves, our neighbours and the universe, the results may be catastrophic.

The population of Africa has increased from 118 million at the beginning of the last century to 778 million, putting increased pressure on natural resources. We are bound to have a very big crisis if we do not wake up. As a consequence of the population expansion, about 500 million hectares of land – 60 per cent of it arable – have been affected by some degree of soil degradation.

Our water resources are suffering from pollution; for instance the aquatic animals in Lake Victoria are being starved of oxygen by algae which thrive on the nutrients from the soil washed into the lake.

The African continent lacks safe water. Uganda, however, is making some progress in delivering it to our people: about 54 per cent of them now have access to it.

An unsustainable lifestyle

Africa – and perhaps the entire developing world – is now undergoing a new form of aggression. Our partners in the developed world have a lifestyle which is simply not sustainable. A lifestyle which generates pollutants and greenhouse gases which threaten to change the nature of our atmosphere and the entire planet is not sustainable. A hole has developed in the ozone layer over the Antarctic, created by some of those greenhouse gases, of which 96 per cent were produced by developed countries.

This is not acceptable in this era of a global village. This form of aggression must stop, especially if we are people who believe in God: loving your

neighbour as you love yourself. This is partly what was addressed at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

How do we solve these problems? We cannot go on commiserating – we must find a solution. Solutions are available; the problem is divergent points of view, which are normally due to divergent, selfish interests. If somebody is pursuing a selfish interest, he will not easily evolve a convergent point of view with others. In order to find solutions we must harmonize our thinking.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) could help fund reforestation and afforestation programmes and investments in clean, alternative sources of energy, especially hydroelectric power and solar energy. Emphasis must be put on electricity which, if it were available in the less developed parts of the world, would be one of the solutions for our environmental problems. In Uganda, about 94 per cent of all energy comes from biomass and, as a result, we burn about 18 million tonnes of wood annually.

With Mark Nelson, UNEP Typhoon

Clean energy

How can we successfully protect our planet when we are stripping it naked at this rate? Since we cannot stop cooking, the only option at our disposal is to generate enough electricity from clean sources. This is why in Uganda, we are building hydroelectric power dams on the river Nile to generate power both for our people and for export.

You cannot, however, build electricity stations on a big and sufficient scale unless you also get economic growth and transformation. Otherwise people cannot afford the electricity.

One of the stimuli that will enable us to achieve sustained economic growth and social transformation is market access to those rich markets of the Europeans, the Americans and the Japanese. Aid on its own is petty and just symbolic, and cannot solve these problems. It is aid in order to stimulate production and enable trade that is useful. Many of the African countries got independence 40 years ago and have been getting aid ever since, but have not made the transition from backward to modern countries. What more proof do you need that aid cannot transform a country? Trade, however, can.

If we work together, it is within our means to promote sustainable development

The leaders of developed countries in Europe, America and Japan are unfair not only to the rest of the world, but also to their own people. I am, among other things, a beef farmer and I sell meat, at $1 per kilo equivalent in local Ugandan shillings. The traders who buy it from me charge the consumers $2 per kilo. A kilo of beef in London is $17, in Japan $200. I asked those people: 'What sort of beef is that of $200?' They told me that they call it Kobe beef. When I asked what that was, they said that you play music for the cow, give it alcohol, and massage it; it is supposed to make the meat more marbled.

The western world is cheating its own people, overcharging them, and suppressing our growth by denying us markets to sell what we produce. If they took my meat at $4 and sold it in London at $8 including transport etc., it would be much better for both the Europeans and us!

Value addition

The other stimulus for growth in this part of the world is value addition. Africa must stop selling raw materials. Take coffee: 2.5 kilos of bean coffee would fetch $1.25 by present day prices. Once they make it soluble coffee, they sell it for $70 in London. Why can't the blending, roasting and grinding be done locally? This massive loss of value must stop.

We should not keep blaming the developed countries regarding the environment, but first of all try to minimize local pollution. We can protect riverbeds by ensuring that we do not cut trees up to the riverbanks. There are laws to ensure this but sometimes our people do not implement them; by leaving strips of forest along rivers, and around lakes, we can stop the soil being washed into the riverbed and into the lakes. We can plant trees on the hillsides to stop soil erosion, and ensure that human and other industrial waste does not go into water by a number of very cost-effective means.

Local effort

Protecting our environment is in our own interest and we must take all the necessary measures locally within our means to ensure it. That is when we can justifiably quarrel with the developed countries about their export of pollution and seek foreign assistance to supplement our local effort.

We can maintain much of the forest cover and at the same time get money by stressing multi-purpose trees rather than merely ornamental ones. We can get money from honey by having trees with flowers which will attract bees. People will be encouraged to grow trees only if they know they are of economic value; telling them to plant trees for the sake of the atmosphere may not make much sense, especially to our mostly rural population in developing nations.

If we work together, it is within our means to promote sustainable development and have a world we can proudly hand over to posterity ■

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is President of the Republic of Uganda.

Achieving WIN-WIN-WIN

SUPACHAI PANITCHPAKDI describes the challenges and opportunities in reconciling environmental protection and trade liberalization

Poor or rich, we are all concerned about our environment. Protecting it, whether locally or globally, is an essential component of sustainable development. There is also an undeniable relationship between alleviating poverty and improving the environment. If the immediate problem is hunger or disease it will be more difficult to be concerned with the larger picture – including some of today's global environmental problems, such as climate change.

Last year, in Doha, ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the objective of sustainable development, as stated in the Preamble of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement itself. They even instructed both the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment and its Committee on Trade and Development to act as fora to identify and debate developmental and environmental aspects of the negotiations, so as to ensure that sustainable development concerns are reflected in the outcome of the Doha Development Agenda. This message was yet again reinforced in the outcome of last year's World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Channelling resources

Trade facilitates economic growth. And while economic growth *per se* is not necessarily sustainable, higher incomes are a precondition for being able to act. If poverty is part of the problem, economic growth will be part of the solution. But, again, greater income is not in itself a remedy for environmental problems: it needs to be accompanied by policies which channel resources accordingly, in a way that leads to responsiveness and accountability.

National governments play a key role. Environmental problems are complex and varied. Academics and politicians battle – and understandably so – over the choice of concrete economic measures to translate policy goals into specific incentives or disincentives in each environmental field. Appropriate regulatory policy is neither self-evident nor cost-free.

Trade liberalization – paradoxical as this may seem to some – is not about deregulation. On the contrary, it spotlights the need for appropriate regulation, or good governance, and increases the burden of responsibility on governments. All this must be considered in the light of the fact that many governments may have serious resource constraints to begin with, or have priorities which lie elsewhere.

Reducing discrimination

The WTO is a rule-making institution. It is concerned with removing unnecessary barriers and distortions to trade and with reducing unjustifiable discrimination between its Members. Trade liberalization may be intrinsically positive to the environment in that it entails a more efficient allocation of global resources. Many governments argue, for example, that subsidies which directly stimulate intensive agricultural production have negative environmental effects and put producers in other parts of the world at a disadvantage. Another example cited by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) are the subsidies which may directly stimulate over-capacity in fishing fleets. Liberalization here has been termed 'win-win-win', for development, the environment and trade.

There is no one WTO set of rules specific to the environment. Environmental issues and concerns are horizontal in nature. Hence, much of the discussion in the WTO is about whether its current rules adequately meet environmental concerns.

It is important to reiterate that the WTO itself does not create environmental standards. The expertise and technical knowledge for this lie in the domain of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), each of them being specific to various global or regional environmental concerns (such as biodiversity, chemicals, etc.). The ongoing negotiations in the WTO are now looking at, among other things, the relationship between existing WTO rules and 'specific trade obligations' contained in MEAs. One of the key issues, which Members have long debated, is how best to ensure that international trade and environmental regimes are mutually supportive.

What does this mean? It should not be possible for a government to negotiate one set of rules in the context of an MEA and another, conflicting, one in a trade forum such as the WTO. If this happens, and assuming – as I must – that governments act

in good faith, failure of communication must lie at the root of the problem. Perhaps it is not so strange that there is a growing need for cooperation and coordination in a world that is increasingly interconnected.

Positive synergies

This calls, first and foremost, for domestic coherence in trade and environmental policy within national governments. It is all very well for us, in the WTO Secretariat, to organize technical assistance and capacity-building activities with our colleagues in other Secretariats such as the United Nations Convention on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNEP and the MEAs – but at the end of the day it is national governments which will negotiate the mutually supportive rules on which both MEAs and the WTO stand. In fact, better interaction between environment and trade officials is likely to be part of the solution to the ongoing trade and environment negotiations themselves.

The commitment from Doha to negotiate on trade and environment should be welcomed as a significant development. It is important for the trading system to continue to advance understanding of the complex linkages between policies in the two areas. Through the negotiations, environmental and trade agencies are increasingly recognizing that there are positive synergies between trade disciplines and environmental objectives.

The WTO/MEA relationship is an important part of the trade and environment debate in the WTO, but it is not at its heart. Many member countries share a fundamental concern that protecting the environment could all too easily be used for trade protectionist purposes – that it might result in arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination, or a disguised restriction on international trade. Of course, nobody questions the importance of environmental protection. No member of the WTO is prevented from taking measures to protect human, animal or plant life or health, or the environment.

Understanding and cooperation

The crux of the matter lies in translating a policy objective into a measure which affects trade. This can be a source of friction, but it need not be if there is better understanding and cooperation on all sides.

Complying with environmental regulations and requirements can be costly for developing countries. Matters are often made worse by the fact that such requirements vary considerably between export markets. If this leads to reduced market access it may not be in the interest of sustainable development. Many developing countries feel that there is a lack of recognition for their own traditional ways of production, which may reflect their own priorities and level of development.

Photo © Stephen Ausmus/USDA/ARS

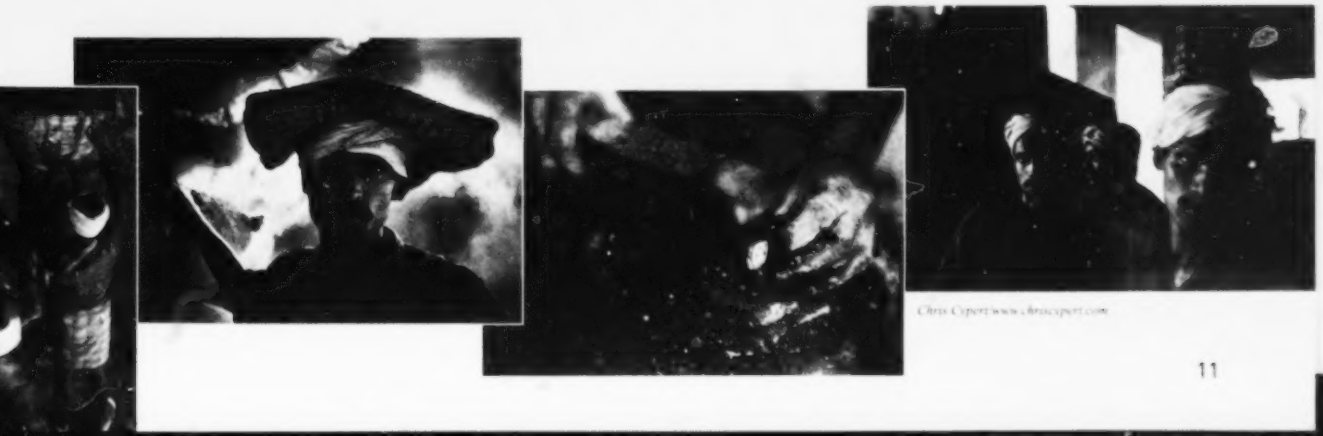
There is an undeniable relationship between alleviating poverty and improving the environment

Herein lies a major challenge: while recognizing the legitimacy of environmental measures and regulations, how should these be crafted so as to take into account the concerns of developing countries whose exports and trade are vital for their development? There has been a call in the WTO for more 'positive' measures, such as capacity-building and technology transfer. We are doing our best through our technical cooperation activities to help developing countries develop the institutional capacity to implement trade rules. Environmental agencies, with other relevant partners, can do the same in their areas of expertise to help developing countries to move on to environmentally cleaner and more sustainable forms of production.

Trade opportunities

Tackling environmental problems is an essential component of sustainable development. But poverty alleviation is also a prerequisite for it. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of market access, in particular for products of export interest to developing countries. Trade opportunities will be key if sustainable development is to be achieved ■

Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi is Director-General of the World Trade Organization.



Chris Cyper/www.chriscyper.com

PEOPLE

Executive Director of UNEP Klaus Toepfer (left) presenting the 2002 UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize to Ashok Khosla, the President of Development Alternatives, New Delhi.

DR. ASHOK KHOSLA, who has created jobs for thousands of poor people in India, has been awarded the 2002 UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize. The President of Development Alternatives – a group of organizations based in New Delhi, which he founded in 1983 – he won the $200,000 prize award for innovating and fostering environmentally friendly, commercially viable technologies across the country. They include village power plants fuelled by agricultural wastes, small factories for recycling paper, and local businesses making low-cost roofing.

The prize, sponsored by the Nippon Foundation and founded by the late Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa, has been awarded every year since 1984 to individuals who have made outstanding global contributions to the management and protection of the environment. Dr. Khosla is to use the prize money to further the work to sustain the activities of Development Alternatives and of TARAhaat.com – an Internet portal for rural India – and to help pave the way for replicating them in other parts of the developing world.

Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP, describes Dr. Khosla as a legend in the realm of sustainable development, personifying the hopes and dreams of billions trapped in the indignity of acute deprivation. He said that the organizations he had created offered 'pragmatic, sensible and life-changing solutions'.

Receiving the award at an evening gala at the American Folk Art Museum in New York City in November 2002, Dr. Khosla said that sustainable development cannot be achieved by 'economic policies that only nurture big, centralized, transportation-intensive, energy-guzzling, resource-wasting production systems: it also needs local-level innovation' ■

OSCAR OLIVERA of Bolivia, winner of the 2001 Goldman Prize for South America, has devoted his $125,000 prize money to founding a new NGO, Fundación Abril, to promote research, education, training and technical skills geared towards expanding 'economic democracy'. He said: 'We do this so that people will be better able to participate in the use, management and exploitation of public resources such as water, education, health, land, work and dignity' ■

***United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed* ELLINE HERFKENS**, *former Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, to act as his Executive Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals Campaign.*

She will work closely with Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, to promote the Goals by helping to spread awareness of them, and by building new coalitions for action to achieve them, in both developed and developing countries.

Mr. Annan said: 'Ms. Herfkens has shown outstanding leadership over the past few years in helping bring the Millennium Development Goals to the forefront of the global development agenda, and I am confident that she will now play a key role in galvanizing action from grassroots to governments in achieving them' ■

Mohamed T. El-Ashry *has announced that he will step down as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) when his term ends in July 2003. Under his leadership, the GEF has grown from a pilot programme to the largest single source of funding for the global environment, with 176 member countries.* ■

ELIZABETH DOWDESWELL, Executive Director of UNEP 1993-1998, has been appointed President of Canada's new Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) which, after a three-year study and a public consultation process, is to put forward a recommended plan to the federal government for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. Richard Drouin, Chair of the NWMO's Board of Directors said: 'Ms. Dowdeswell's record of championing sustainable development in Canada and at the United Nations uniquely qualifies her to head up this important new organization' ■

Executive Director of UNEP KLAUS TOEPFER has been honoured with the 2002 Bruno H. Schubert Environment Prize and the German Environment Prize – held to be the most prestigious such prize in Europe – jointly with **Dr. Peter Lüth**, a pioneer of biological pesticides ■

PROMISES *to keep*

HILDE JOHNSON says that the World Summit on Sustainable Development provided a basis for action, and urges rich countries to take full responsibility to deliver their commitments

Three months have passed since we concluded the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. It is time to fulfil our promises.

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio succeeded in putting sustainable development at the forefront of the political agenda. An important breakthrough was made. Since then, a lot of dirty water has passed under the bridge. So have many of our promises. We – the international community – have failed to fulfil our commitments from Rio. And the failure lies first and foremost with the rich countries.

As the millennium turned, we were given a chance to restate our obligations and our intent to promote development and to reduce poverty.

At the Millennium Summit the international community adopted the eight Millennium Goals. We have committed ourselves to halving poverty by 2015. In Monterrey, the international community had the chance to let their words be accompanied with money. Important – though not sufficient – progress in securing funding for development was made.

Then we reached Johannesburg. The journey from Rio had taken ten years, and a lot seemed to have been lost on the way. Protecting the environment turned out to be a much tougher battle ten years later. Progress had been made in strengthening the commitments and agreeing on conventions. Still, follow-up was lacking. In poverty reduction what we needed was to go forward, but the international community took several steps backwards. The gap between rich and poor increased, and official development assistance declined significantly.

That is partly why the World Summit on Sustainable Development differed from Rio. It put poverty reduction at its core. As stated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, eradicating poverty is not only the greatest challenge facing the world today, but a requirement for sustainable development.

A basis for action

Despite the less than ideal outcome of the World Summit, it provides – together with Rio and the Millennium Development Goals – our basis for action. It is on this basis that we have to move ahead. It is on this basis that we have to act. Our commitment to fight poverty, to promote social and economic development, and to protect the environment stands. It is time to keep our promises, and fulfil our obligations. It is time for deeds, not words. ▸

Fighting poverty must be at the core of our efforts. To be won, this fight must be based on a strong partnership between the developing countries and the rich countries. A 'partnership deal', a compact, was made in Monterrey. The rich countries committed themselves to give debt relief, increase their aid and open their markets for more trade from the developing countries. The developing countries committed themselves to improve their governance and strengthen their policies. The main vehicle for this partnership is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, to be shaped by national authorities and supported by the international community.

Norway is insistent on fulfilling our part of the deal. The baseline for our effort is outlined in the Action Plan for Combating Poverty in the South towards 2015, launched by the Norwegian Government in March 2002.

- We are steadily increasing our aid budget, and have committed to channel 1 per cent of our gross national income to aid by 2005.
- We are continuously pushing for broader, deeper and faster debt relief, not only for the heavily indebted poor countries but also for post-conflict and middle-income countries. Norway will continue to be in the forefront on this.
- We are actively participating in the World Trade Organization (WTO) trade negotiations – with a development focus. We are working at increasing market access and in this way aligning our trade policy with our general development policy. Norway provides duty free and quota free access of all goods from the least developed countries.

Remembering Rio, we know that aid, debt relief and trade all have to increase within an environmentally sustainable framework.

We know that the world's poor are often directly dependent on natural resources and ecological systems to meet their needs. We know that they are dependent on nature to lift themselves out of poverty. We know that fertile ground secures food – and income. We know that clean, safe water and adequate sanitation has clear health implications. And that 1.1 billion people lack access to safe water. I can only refer to the statement made by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the *Millennium Report*: 'No single measure would do more to reduce disease and save lives in the developing world than bringing safe water and adequate sanitation to all.' It is most fitting that 2003 is the International Year of Freshwater.

Threatened livelihoods

We also know that, when an environmental disaster strikes, the poor are the first to suffer the consequences. Land degradation, desertification and drought are threatening the livelihoods of more than a billion people in more than 100 countries. In Africa alone, over 38 million people risk starvation. Drought and floods have contributed heavily to this situation. And it is not only the environment that is disaster-struck; it is humanity.

We have just learned, through recent studies from the University of Oslo, that the humanitarian disaster in the Sahel in the 1970s and 1980s was triggered by industrial emissions in Europe and North America, which peaked in the 1980s. We now have a new humanitarian crisis on our hands. The Executive Director of the World Food Programme, James T. Morris, says the crisis in Africa is part of a worrying new global phenomenon of shifting weather patterns, which have led to unparalleled natural disasters. It is my claim that, if these shifts are man-made, they are made by us – the rich countries. It is we – the rich countries – that carry the main responsibility for the global environmental problems. And it is with us that the main responsibility for securing sustainable development lies. This responsibility was not duly reflected in the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Supportive partnerships

But this is no excuse not to deliver. It is on the present basis that we will have to provide our support to our partner countries and implement environmental measures in our own countries. We can not put ourselves in a situation where we – the rich countries – fail to act, and leave the developing countries to pick up the bill.

A first step in the right direction was taken in Johannesburg, when we reached the important conclusion that

When an environmental disaster strikes, the poor are the first to suffer the consequences

multilateral environmental agreements are to be treated equally with the WTO rules. This conclusion reflects that the two legal regimes serve equally important purposes. We have to ensure that this mutual equality and supportiveness is retained in the WTO negotiations.

But this is not sufficient. We need a more appropriate international institutional architecture in the environmental field to ensure effective implementation of international environmental treaties. Furthermore, we need to ensure that environmental concerns are taken into account, and as seriously, as are financial and other concerns.

Addressing interlinkages

We also need to work with our partner countries. Norway has to this effect entered into a partnership agreement with UNEP to address the interlinkages between poverty, environment and trade in African countries. This partnership has two main objectives. Firstly, we aim to strengthen the environmental management capacity at national and local levels. This will again serve as a basis for poverty alleviation. Secondly, we seek to improve the understanding of the linkages between poverty, environment and trade, and thereby promote coherent and consistent approaches to the poverty and environment challenges. It is our ambition that this partnership will help our partner countries take the responsibility for designing national environmental action plans and incorporating them in their national poverty reduction strategies.

But before that, we – the rich countries – have to do our part. When – not if – we do so, and deliver our promises from Monterrey and in protecting the environment, it might be time to make another deal – another compact – with our partner countries. When we take the full share of our responsibility, we can ask our partner countries to take theirs. Then a more sustainable world is possible ■

Hilde Johnson is Minister of International Development, Norway.

As precious as GOLD

PASCAL LAMY emphasizes the importance of biodiversity to developing countries and outlines moves to secure a fair deal on trade in its riches

Plant and animal resources have always fed and nurtured us. Recognizing and protecting their biodiversity in complex ecosystems is a major challenge of our times: the challenge of sustainable development. Many believe the potential of bio-resources has barely been tapped, and that traditional knowledge about the medicinal properties of plants, for instance, still has valuable secrets to offer. Apart from drugs from plants known locally through traditional knowledge, disease-resistant or hardy crops are examples of the kind of resources that might become available through biotech inventions.

The biodiversity of the rainforest is a resource as real as any precious metal. Consider the language that has developed around it, with so-called 'bio-prospectors' seeking commercially valuable resources. Such agents are not always seen as benign. Activists see 'bio-piracy' as a new crime of our times – that of companies which abuse their power in seeking to obtain patents or other forms of intellectual property protection over inventions involving resources or traditional knowledge that belong by rights to their respective communities.

Special responsibility

As the world's biggest trading partner, the European Union (EU) has a special responsibility to respond to the issues that biodiversity raises. The legitimacy of the world trading system is at stake in a debate that one could caricature as pitting the technology-rich North against the biodiversity-rich South. That is why I believe the current Doha Development Round of negotiations, under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), must address developing countries' legitimate concerns, while developing intellectual property protection that can and should benefit everyone with a stake in the issue.

The EU signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, which came into force in 1993 as a result of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. This aims to conserve biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The EU's aim is to foster its implementation in all respects, with technical assistance to enhance the capacity of developing countries to do so if necessary. This can, I believe, be done while pursuing negotiations within the WTO framework.

The Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, which came into force in 1995, aims to create minimum standards of intellectual protection that all WTO Members must recognize; to ensure states make available procedures for holders to enforce their intellectual property rights; and to provide a disputes procedure.

As the world's biggest trading partner, the EU has a special responsibility to respond to the issues that biodiversity raises

Carsten Peter/Hanna/NPF Epson

I am aware that many countries fear that the TRIPS Agreement may undermine the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity, or may not support them enough. Some are concerned that it does nothing to ensure that those seeking patents for inventions based on genetic resources respect the Biodiversity Convention's principles on benefit-sharing. They argue that the absence of information on the geographical origin of bio-material used in inventions makes it difficult for them to keep track of the commercial use of these resources or to check whether bio-prospectors have respected the principles of the Biodiversity Convention.

Material benefits

Indigenous or local groups in developing countries are right to expect to benefit materially if their traditional knowledge is applied in ways that are shared via commercial initiatives and trade. This is why the EU is working on ways of helping developing countries rich in traditional knowledge to identify it and prevent it being undervalued or abused.

To move the discussion forward, the EU has contributed a Concept Paper for discussion at the WTO's TRIPS Council in Geneva (1). This explores the relationship between the TRIPS agreement and the Biodiversity Convention, and recognizes ▸

Expanding THE CIRCLE

JOSETTE S. SHINER says that trade, environmental stewardship and economic development are mutually supportive goals

The United States is committed to expanding the circle of nations that benefit from global trade. From Seoul to Santiago, trade has proven to be an essential steppingstone out of poverty and a win for freedom, opportunity and the environment. Recent history has demonstrated the positive linkage between trade, development, environmental quality and rising standards of living.

The Bush administration believes that free trade and environmental improvements can be mutually supportive. The Trade Act of 2002, which President Bush signed last August, incorporates a balanced set of environmental objectives: to ensure a level playing field for the United States through effective enforcement of our trading partners' environmental laws; to guard against the use of environmental standards for protectionist purposes; and to help developing country trading partners build their environmental protection capacity through cooperative mechanisms.

We will be pursuing these objectives in each of our free trade agreements (FTA), including the Singapore FTA that US Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick is close to finalizing and our just completed negotiations with Chile. Environmental issues are likewise an important part of the Doha Development Agenda. Within this World Trade Organization (WTO) mandate, the United States is seeking to identify initiatives that enhance the natural symbiosis between trade and environmental policies.

Environmental technologies

A good example is our effort to negotiate new disciplines on subsidies that contribute to overcapacity in the global fishing industry, leading to depletion of global fishing stocks. We are also pressing for increased market access for environmental technologies, thereby helping US exporters while giving importing countries access to the full range of cutting-edge technologies. And we are exploring new avenues to increase cooperation between the WTO and secretariats responsible for trade-related multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes.

In addition, environmental reviews of trade negotiations have become an important part of our process. These reviews provide us with valuable information on trade agreements' likely environmental impacts, both positive and negative, which helps in developing our negotiating objectives and identifying appropriate policy responses.

Review and assessment

The environmental reviews for the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the Doha Development Agenda are already underway. We are conducting similar assessments for our FTA negotiations with countries such as Chile and Singapore. We are working closely with many departments and agencies to ensure that our approach to reviews is sound and to encourage and support other countries to conduct their own studies.

The United States also continues to fund programmes that make a positive impact through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and through multilateral institutions such as the World Bank. USAID is giving money

AS PRECIOUS AS GOLD *Continued from page 15*

developing countries' legitimate concerns to ensure that the agreement encourages those seeking patents over biotech inventions to respect the Convention's basic principles.

The key proposal in the paper is a means of obliging applicants for patents who have used the fruits of bio-prospecting for new products to disclose the geographical origin of any biological material used in biotech inventions. At present, there is no such obligation. The paper also supports the idea of providing better protection for traditional knowledge, and recognizes the right of subsistence farmers in developing countries to re-use and exchange seeds, even those covered by intellectual property rights via so-called farmers' exemptions. Larger-scale commercial farmers would stay subject to more stringent rules.

The EU's paper argues that if we use the tools at our disposal, TRIPS and the Biodiversity Convention – far from being in conflict – are compatible and can mutually reinforce each other, both at the national level and internationally. To this end, the EU welcomes the work of a new World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Intergovernmental Committee on traditional knowledge. This may result in a new international model for the legal protection of this important knowledge with it we could focus attention on the extent to which such protection can be included in the TRIPS Agreement.

There will be practical problems on the way, as many countries that might benefit in the long run do not yet have legislation in place on access to genetic resources. We must welcome the will of Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries meeting in Cancun in February 2002 to make progress with a united front on this issue.

The raw material of which I write is mostly concentrated in habitats still being explored for genetic resources, far from the shores of the 15 EU countries. So why has Europe taken up this cause? The answer is this: if the Doha Development Agenda really is going to make the developing world a better place for its citizens, then there must be a fair deal when we review this part of the TRIPS Agreement. The EU is committed to making sure this happens. We all stand to gain in the end ■

Pascal Lamy is EU Trade Commissioner.

[1] EU Communication to the TRIPS Council on the review of Article 27.3(b) of the TRIPS Agreement, the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore. September 2002. (http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/intprop/ecomtrips.htm)

to non-governmental organizations to work with governments and civil society to build capacity for conducting environmental assessments of trade agreements and other environmental protection goals. For example, in Brazil, USAID supports a Renewable Energy Organizations Network; in Central Asia, US contributions support a Replicable Waste Minimization Program.

Mutually supportive goals

Most importantly, as the United States builds opportunity through trade agreements, we help demonstrate that trade, environmental stewardship, and economic development are and can be mutually supportive goals. Our programme of trade liberalization is designed to create new economic opportunities throughout the world, especially in developing nations where fragile economies are just beginning to blossom. We want citizens of developing and developed countries to understand the important chain of events linking trade, development, environmental quality, and a rising standard of living.

The benefits of trade touch the lives of workers and families around the globe. The more we expand trading networks with other nations, the more opportunities, better jobs, and economic growth we create. In November 2001, the United States played a key role in launching a new global round of trade liberalization negotiations as part of the WTO's Doha Development Agenda. These negotiations will open markets around the globe, with special emphasis on creating new export opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing and services.

Elimination of barriers to trade could lift 300 million people out of poverty

The United States has already tabled substantial proposals to free up trade in services and agriculture, inject greater transparency into WTO procedures including dispute settlements, allow poor countries to gain greater access to drugs needed to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other public health crises, and remove tariffs on all industrial and consumer goods by 2015. The United States also is pursuing free trade agreements with a number of countries and regions of the world.

Through these trade negotiations, the United States is setting the stage for global growth in trade that will help both developed and developing countries benefit from increased commerce. Abundant research demonstrates, in fact, that developing countries have much to gain from opening their markets to trade – and everything to lose by staying closed to global commerce.

■ The World Bank recently conducted a study of developing countries that opened themselves to global competition in the 1990s, and of those that did not. The income per person for globalizing developing countries grew more than 5 per cent a year, while incomes in non-globalizing poor countries grew just over 1 per cent. Globalizing developing countries sharply reduced absolute poverty rates over the last 20 years, and the income levels of the poorest households have kept up with the growth.

■ Other research highlights the benefits that developing countries could gain from lowering their own barriers to trade. One study predicts that developing countries would see a $540 billion dollar annual income gain from the elimination of barriers to trade in goods, with three-quarters of that gain due to the elimination of developing countries' own trade restrictions.

■ The complete elimination of barriers to trade in goods globally could lift an additional 300 million people in developing countries out of poverty by 2015 – more than the entire population of the United States.

■ Overall, it is estimated that the elimination of global trade barriers would increase world income by $1.9 trillion each and every year.

Africa's stake

No region of the world has a greater stake in global trade liberalization than Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of global trade has dropped from nearly 4 per cent in the 1960s to less than 2 per cent today. As a result, African countries and peoples have not fully shared in the growing prosperity that has accompanied the surge in global trade over the past few decades.

In response to this challenge, this Administration is actively pursuing an international aid and trade partnership with Africa. On trade, we are opening markets and opportunities through negotiation of a free trade agreement with the Southern African Customs Union, preferential trade arrangements, and global trade negotiations in the WTO. We are bolstering our aid to the region through President Bush's Millennium Challenge Account initiative, which will substantially increase US assistance to developing countries that are opening markets and ruling justly.

The United States listens to the concerns of developing nations striving towards free trade. As President Bush has said, we must "include all the world's poor in an expanding circle of development." The United States is committed to directing a trade agenda that embraces this goal – and we are confident that this will reap benefits globally for the environment as well. ■

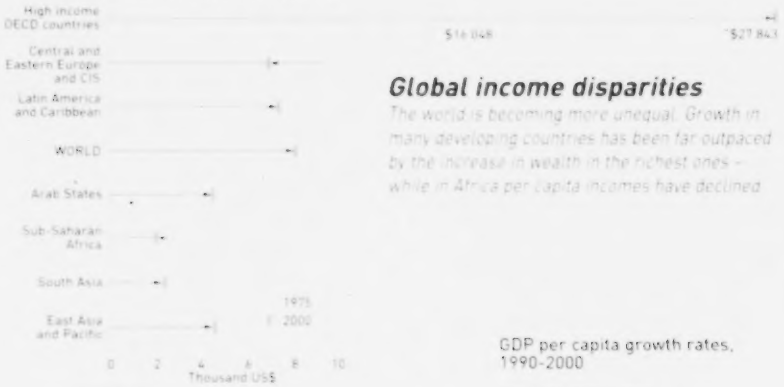
Josette S. Shiner is Associate United States Trade Representative.

Globalization, poverty, trade and the environment

Over the last half century the world economy has grown fivefold. In the same period world trade has grown nearly three times as fast, by a factor of 14. International trade, at $6 trillion a year, is a massive force for economic, environmental and social change: its growth and liberalization is changing the way people live and work around the globe. In addition, annual flows of private foreign investment to developing countries are more than five times greater than official overseas development assistance.

While the last decade of the 20th century saw great economic progress in many parts of the world, it also witnessed stagnation and setbacks. An estimated 1.2 billion people still live on less than one US dollar a day. A fifth of the world's people living in its

GDP per capita, 1975-2000 (2000 ppp US$)



Global income disparities

The world is becoming more unequal. Growth in many developing countries has been far outpaced by the increase in wealth in the richest ones – while in Africa per capita incomes have declined.

Developing countries' external debt, 2001

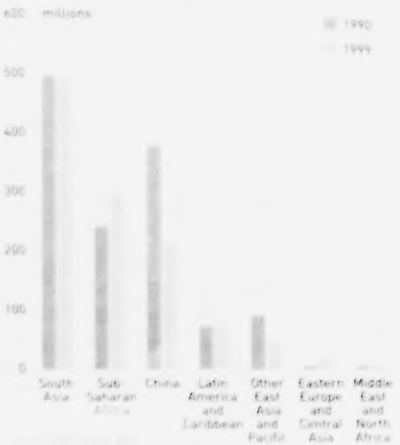
Debt service repayments

Repayments by developing countries grew from 19.6 per cent to 22.3 per cent of export earnings over the 1990s. The need to increase exports to make repayments can lead to overexploitation of natural resources.

Living on less than $1 a day

The number of extremely poor people in the world fell only slightly during the 1990s though – because of growing human numbers – their share of world population fell from 29 to 23 per cent.

People living on less than $1 per day, 1990-1999



GDP per capita growth rates, 1990-2000

Failing to grow out of poverty

Increases in per capita income of 3.7 per cent a year will be needed – even on optimistic estimates – if countries are to meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty. During the 1990s only 24 (including the most populous, India and China) achieved this rate; the rest fell short or actually suffered declining income.

Mergers and acquisitions

The largest firms are becoming bigger and more international in a globalizing world. In 1970 there were some 7,000 transnational companies; by 2000 there were well over 50,000.

richest countries share 86 per cent of its GDP, the poorest fifth just 1 per cent – and the gap between them continues to increase. These differential effects of trade and investment on development and poverty reduction show that while economic growth is of central importance, its quality is the key for sustainable development. Both the sources and the patterns of growth also shape development outcomes.

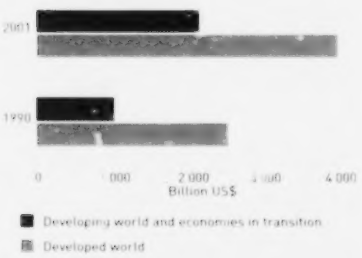
National and international policy frameworks need to be broadened to integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in a democratically accountable and equitable way.

The links between trade and the environment are important, but multiple and complex. The growth and liberalization of trade are neither necessarily good nor bad for the health of the planet. They can cause resources to be used more efficiently and create wealth that can be used to protect the environment. However they can also increase trade-related pressures that contribute significantly to natural resource depletion and environmental degradation.

The challenge is to manage the processes of trade liberalization and globalization in a way that promotes environmental sustainability and equitable human development. In short, the more integrated environmental, trade and other economic policies are, the more sustainable will be economic growth, and the more positive will be the contribution of globalization to the environment and sustainable development.

The processes of globalization that so strongly influence the evolution of society need to be directed towards resolving, rather than aggravating the serious imbalances – between rich and poor, and humanity and nature – that now plague the world ■

World merchandise exports, 1990-2001



Regional share of world merchandise exports (%)

	1990	2001
Developing world and economies in transition	28	35
Africa	*3*	*2*
Central and Eastern Europe, Baltic States and CIS	*3*	*5*
Middle East	*4*	*4*
China	*2*	*4*
Rest of Asia	*12*	*14*
Latin America	*4*	*6*
Developed World	72	65
Japan	*9*	*7*
North America	*15*	*17*
Western Europe	*48*	*41*

Share of exports

The share of developing countries has been increasing, but they still have a far smaller proportion than developed ones.

Mergers and acquisitions, 1990-2000

Markets first, 2032

Sustainability first, 2032

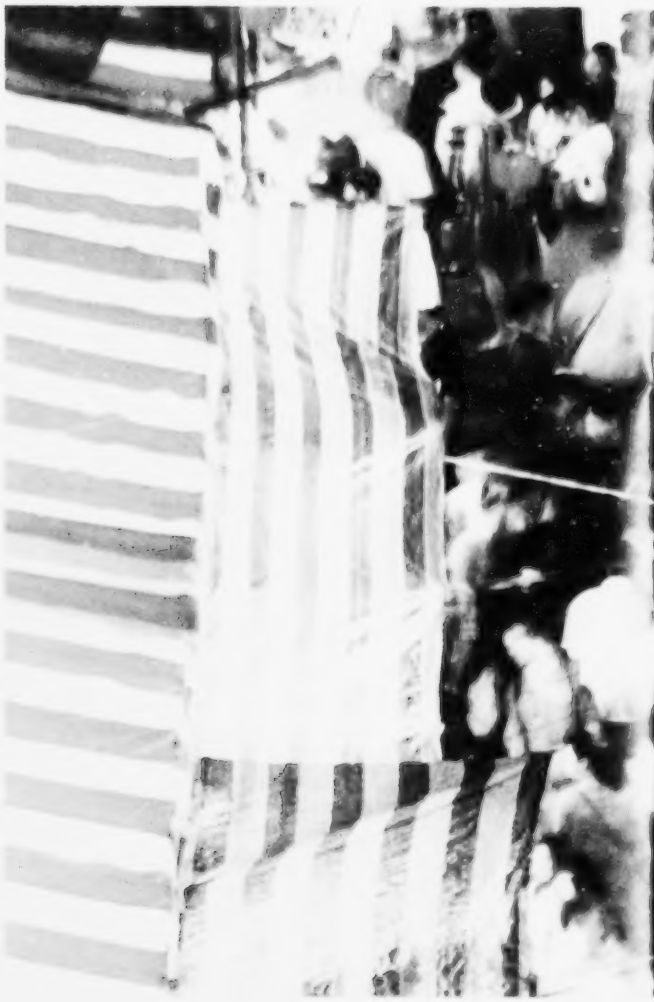
High impact
Medium-high impact
Low-medium impact
Semi-deserts and deserts
Wetlands
Forests
Grassland/savannah
Cropland
Water

Alternative futures

These maps contrast effects of the expansion of infrastructure under two of the scenarios for the next 30 years drawn up for UNEP's Global Environment Outlook 3 report, published last year: 'markets first', where most of the world adopts the values and expectations prevailing in today's industrialized countries, and 'sustainability first', where a new environment and development paradigm emerges in response to the challenge of sustainability. The infrastructure network (roads, power lines, airports, harbours and dams) affects large areas, for example new roads can lead to widespread settlement and deforestation. Impacts increase under both scenarios, but they are much greater under the 'markets first' one.

Acting LOCAL

ANITA RODDICK



The debt burden

Localization means making people less dependent by helping them put their skills and resources to use.

COOPERATION *is catching*

ANTONY BURGMANS describes how his company and a non-governmental organization together joined forces to promote sustainability

By the mid-1990s it was clear that fish was likely to become ever more important for health and nutrition – if only there were enough supplies. But it was also obvious that someone had to do something to conserve stocks if our frozen fish business at Unilever was to survive.

The statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) vividly showed the depth of the crisis and they are little changed today: 48 per cent of fisheries are fully exploited, 16 per cent are overfished and 9 per cent depleted.

The decline in fish stocks is a major global problem involving a complex web of interests, including governments, fishing communities and business. We realized that despite our substantial presence in the market – as one of the world's largest buyers of frozen fish – we could do little to address the situation on our own. We had to seek allies to leverage change.

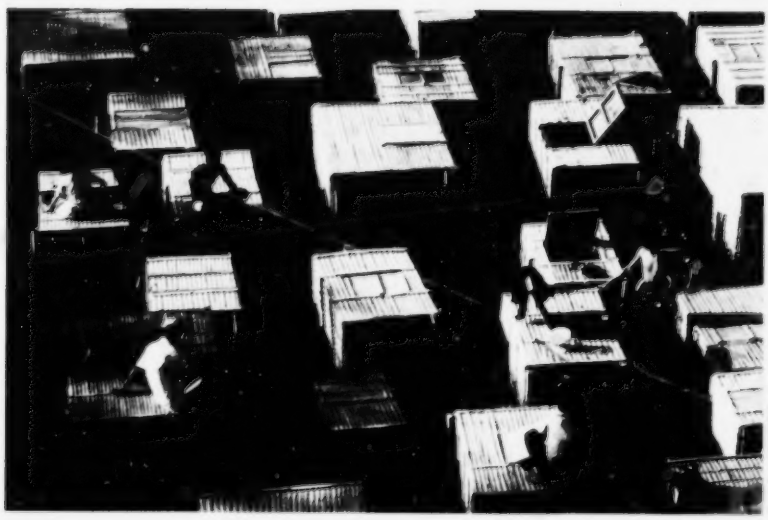
At the time I was Director, Frozen Food and Ice Cream, and one of my responsibilities was our frozen fish business. I and my colleagues were impressed with the work that the international conservation organization WWF had done to establish the new independent Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The FSC sets standards for sustainable forestry and accredits organizations which verify that forests are managed according to FSC principles and criteria. The timber or wood products from those forests are permitted to bear the FSC's label, which enables buyers to choose sustainable suppliers.

Forging partnerships

We began discussions with WWF to look at a similar idea for fish. Such partnerships – with non-governmental organizations now quite common – were rare at the time and we had no direct experience in the field. Our initial discussions with WWF confirmed that we had different motives, but a common purpose: the need to assure the long-term sustainability of global fish stocks and the marine ecosystem.

I realized early on that it was going to take time to get to know each other and to develop a shared approach and a definition of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). We needed a strong, trusting relationship jointly to tackle the challenges we faced – including the scepticism of our many critics within the fishing business and among our own colleagues who doubted both the sense and practicality of our ideas. Our conviction that we – in partnership – were doing absolutely the right thing was driven by the desperate need to address the fishing crisis. I must acknowledge the remarkable contribution made by Mike Sutton, who led the WWF team at the time, later passing the baton so effectively to Scott Burns.

After much hard work and argument, the drafting team eventually came up with the framework for the MSC, which would run a certification scheme for sustainable fisheries management. Fish in shops sourced from certified fisheries



The decline in fish stocks is a global problem involving a complex web of interests

would be able to carry a logo on the pack, so that consumers could choose products from well-managed fisheries. In this way, the market would help encourage responsible fishing. It was clear that the MSC would need seed funding for some time, but the hope was that the income from licences would make it financially independent.

Turning vision into reality

We were very excited that we had achieved something significant when we signed the agreement that started the MSC. Of course we felt nervous and, as with all new ideas, there was still a huge amount of work to do to turn vision into reality. Unilever and WWF each contributed different strengths, knowledge and contacts to support the formation of the MSC.

The next big achievement was the global consultation process, involving discussions with environmental and marine experts, scientists, fishing industry and trade representatives, government officials and regulators, and many others connected with the marine environment. After eight workshops and two expert drafting sessions, the MSC adopted principles and criteria for sustainable fisheries. These are closely based on the Code of Responsible Fisheries developed by the FAO.

The most important milestone was reached in mid-1998 with the appointment of an international board of directors to run the MSC under the chairmanship of John Selwyn Gummer, who brought a wide range of interests and experience in selecting board members. From January 1999 the MSC has been a fully independent non-profit organization. It has evolved its structure and governance to fit the tasks and challenges it faces, while making progress with certifications.

The MSC opened for business as an international accreditation body in early 1999 and since then has been accrediting professional bodies to assess and certify fisheries around the world. Over 100 major seafood processors, traders and retailers from more than 20 countries have now pledged their support for the MSC programme. Over 40 fisheries, covering both the developed and the developing worlds, have either started or completed the certification process and by late 2002 there were more than 100 products bearing the MSC logo. Unilever and WWF now play the role of enthusiastic supporters, available to help with specific needs – such as training and communications support – when asked. Neither organization is involved in decision-making, but they have an advisory presence on the technical and stakeholder councils.

Increasing the range

In 2000 Unilever began selling the certified Alaskan salmon in Switzerland, in its Iglo-Filegro range, and it has since adapted several of its leading European frozen fish products under the Iglo and Birds Eye brands to use New Zealand hoki – the first white fish to be certified to the MSC standard.

An important factor in the MSC's future success will be consumer recognition and awareness of its logo. On-pack information and other communication play a key role in explaining sustainable fishing and why it is important. The MSC has to work hard at getting awareness of its logo. Then it has to promote an appreciation that the fish products displaying it have been caught in a way that preserves supplies for the future and supports fishing communities. As brand owners, we know just how challenging this is.

Further action

There is still a long way to go before the future of our fish stocks is secured, and further action is needed now. This was recognized at last year's World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where governments committed to restore depleted fish stocks, where possible, by 2015. I believe the MSC can make a huge contribution.

I am also very encouraged to see how many other food companies and retailers are increasingly enthusiastic about the MSC. It was a lonely road when we and WWF started but I am confident – and immensely proud – that we did the right thing. The fundamental premise on which it was founded is still correct. The challenge for us and others selling fish products is to bring sustainable fish to the shops and to provide easily-understood labelling and information so that consumers are well informed. We know, too, that the example of the MSC is vitally important to encourage the world's fisheries to believe that a sustainable future is possible ■

Antony Burgmans is Chairman, Unilever N.V. and Vice-chairman, Unilever Plc.

BOOKS & PRODUCTS

International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology

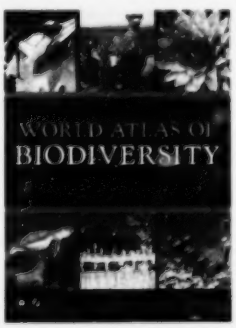
THE WORLD BANK has launched an international consultative process on the risks and opportunities of using agricultural science to reduce hunger and improve rural livelihoods in the developing world (www.agassessment.org).

The eight-month process, which will run until the middle of 2003, is aimed at resulting in an international assessment that would give decision-makers the tools and information needed to answer the tough questions surrounding the issue. The assessment would be modelled on the ones on climate change and ozone depletion that have already proved invaluable in guiding policy-makers.

The initiative will examine a broad range of issues, such as organic agriculture, traditional plant breeding techniques, new farming technologies and biotechnology. Representatives of 19 governments and eight United Nations agencies met with scientists, agriculturalists, industry and non-governmental organizations at the first meeting of the consultative process in Dublin in late 2002. The delegates – who included such antagonists as Monsanto and Greenpeace – made considerable progress in a constructive atmosphere.

'Nearly 800 million people go to bed hungry every night and over the next 50 years, food production will have to double to meet growing demands', said Ian Johnson, the World Bank's Vice-president for Sustainable Development, who also chairs the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). 'This will involve both productivity and environmental management challenges. As we move forward, the application of science to agriculture needs to be fully assessed in terms of its contribution to enabling farmers to be more productive. But equally, the environmental and social risks, as well as ethical issues, need to be discussed in an open and transparent manner' ■

THE UNEP-WCMC WORLD ATLAS OF BIODIVERSITY *(University of California Press, http://www.ucpress.edu, $54.95) addresses concern for the environment and the increased appreciation of the links between ecosystems and humankind. Building on a wealth of research and analysis by the conservation community worldwide, the book provides a comprehensive and accessible view of key global issues in biodiversity, outlining the broad ecological relationships between humans and the natural world, summarizing information on the health of the planet, and examining the possible impacts of varying scenarios for the future* ■



BLUE MAGIC – a UNEP-supported IMAX film produced by Francois Mantello of 3D Entertainment – shows the immense diversity and beauty of marine life on coral reefs. 'This can only serve to raise awareness further about the moral, economic and environmental imperatives for saving the world's coral reefs for current and future generations,' said Klaus Toepfer, UNEP's Executive Director. Blue Magic, directed by Jean-Jacques Mantello and filmed by Gavin McKinney, will be released worldwide in early 2003. (http://www.bluemagic3d.com) ■

The GLOWSTAR RECHARGEABLE SOLAR LANTERN – developed by Intermediate Technology Consultants Enterprise Development Programme for developing country villages (http://www.itcltd.com/glowstar/) – is offering rural African families a first step up the 'energy ladder'. Designed to be reliable and robust in harsh conditions, the lantern gives four to five hours of light, or powers a small radio for 15 hours. It is easily recharged by the sun in a full day ■

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT *is a resource for the growing family of UNEP partners. Within its pages governments; intergovernmental organizations; national, regional and global institutions; academia; civil society and the private sector will find ideas and examples of how UNEP can help make real their plans and aspirations for a better, more sustainable world. Available mid-January 2003 from SMI, PO Box 119, Pin Green, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4TP, UK* ■

YOUNG'S 'FISH FOR LIFE' Alaska Salmon with a lemon and dill crust is the Marine Stewardship Council's 100th eco-labelled product (http://www.youngsbluecrest.co.uk/). The charity – which was established by Unilever and WWF in 1997, and has been independent since 1999 – gives the label to well-managed and sustainable fisheries ■

THE EARTHSCAN READER ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Earthscan £22.95, orders@lbsltd.co.uk) gives a useful overview of many aspects of globalization, trade, poverty and the environment. Editors Kevin P. Gallagher and Jacob Werksman have brought together a wide range of authoritative authors from all six continents to act as a guide to the next decade of work in this area ■

Getting through the BOTTLENECK

JEFFREY SACHS describes the positive and negative effects of globalization, and proposes ways forward to achieve sustainable development

The truth about sustainable development is not to be found in the camps of either the pure optimists or the disaster mongers. Four positive trends and three negative ones must be taken into account.

The first positive trend is the slowing of global population growth. There is a significant shift in global fertility that will enable us at least to think about moving to a world of near stable populations within a century, maybe sooner. Fertility in about 40 per cent of the world's countries is now below the replacement rate. Another 40 per cent are experiencing continued downward movement of fertility rates. This important global shift is unlikely to be reversed.

The second is the increasing proportion of the world's population that lives in urban areas. We have not yet figured out how to make our urban environments as comfortable as they need to be, especially in the poor megacities. But there are tremendous advantages in providing basic services, infrastructure, access to health, education, sanitation, water, technology and science to an increasingly urbanized world.

Technological advance

Third, and most positive of all, is the continuing explosion of scientific and technological knowledge. We continue to accelerate our capacity to mobilize scientific knowledge in useful technologies. The story of economic development in its narrower sense over the last two centuries is overwhelmingly one of technological advances.

And the fourth positive trend is the clear evidence that those technologies are diffusing widely in the world. The clearest case is China which, with more than 20 per cent of the world's population, has had perhaps an eight to tenfold increase in properly measured per capita gross national product since its economy was opened in 1978.

Those who hold that globalization is a disaster for the poor are factually wrong. The living standards of perhaps 3 billion or more people have been increasing over the past 25 years and it is the diffusion of knowledge and technologies that has allowed for this.

On the other hand, there are the three deep negative trends. There is no doubt that there is profound and dangerous ecological stress at every scale of our human society. Significant places in the world face ecological collapse. There is no doubt also that, at the global scale, we are pushing limits of profound risk, whether over anthropogenic climate change, depletion of global fisheries, or loss of biodiversity.

Second, those who would parade the triumphs of globalization should also be honest enough to explain that a quarter of the world remains in desperate poverty and perhaps a fifth remains stuck in the most horrific and dire poverty trap. There are perhaps 1 billion such people in this world, the poorest of the poor.

For them, the underlying mechanisms through which knowledge, technology, science and material improvement diffuse are not operating. The forces of globalization are almost not at work except to draw out the best minds in an international brain drain that globalization itself has intensified, leaving countries in a downward spiral of disease, violence, impoverishment, unpayable debt and ecological catastrophe.

Finally the third negative factor is the point that – while globalization creates incredibly powerful positive forces, mainly the diffusion of knowledge – it also creates powerful negative ones. When you are together in a network, the ills can be transmitted through it just like the benefits. The ills of terrorism are networked globally in this way. The international networks have no doubt also accelerated the transmission of HIV/AIDS around the world. Mass migration, refugee movements, violence, drug trafficking, criminality, money laundering, disease transmission, also readily diffuse over international networks.

Shaping the future

The future is not to be predicted but to be shaped. It is not a matter of running our models and deciding which scenario is the most likely, but one of mobilizing human agency to address the ills and to champion the positive tendencies. There will be two huge issues of profound significance for our future. The first is the role of science and technology. I believe that the problems of human impact on the local and global environment, the challenges of raising living standards in ecologically stressed regions, the challenges of pandemic disease, will first and foremost be met technologically. The question is whether science can preserve the social space that it has had for the past two centuries. We have seen some wonderful international science in recent years showing how, despite incredibly intense political pressures, the directness and honesty that characterizes good science can prevail. ▶

We are pushing limits of profound risk, whether over anthropogenic climate change, depletion of fisheries or loss of biodiversity

Despite huge pressures from some of the biggest companies in the world and big political pressures from the most powerful country in the world, the climate scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have been able to hold their ground and produce a flow of documentation in a new science of high uncertainty that is rigorous, apolitical, and stands the test of the deepest and most aggressive scrutiny. This role for science is by no means assured, but it is critical for the future.

The second factor involves the possibilities for global governance. Global-scale problems require global institutions and unprecedented levels of global cooperation. We are groping towards serious global institutions that are capable of addressing global-scale challenges of the kind that we have not recognized or had to face in the past.

But our ability to solve these problems will depend on an effective set of global institutions.

Can science and technology and global institutions do what they need to do? We are passing through a bottleneck, but not going over a cliff. We can find marvellous answers to the ecological, health and energy challenges with the positive trends at hand: with the power of science and technology, with the technologies of carbon sequestration and clean energy, of desalinization and improved management of clean water; with the increasing ingenuity in new material sciences and especially in the biological sciences. We are not that far away as it is. We will also arrive, I believe, at more stable human populations, and more urban-based populations where basic human services can be delivered.

But getting from here to there is going to be a treacherous and dangerous course. We have decades to make our way and decades of profound risks.

There are four main challenges to getting through this bottleneck quickly and safely.

Breaking the poverty trap

First, breaking the poverty traps of the world's poorest people – something so easily within the reach of the richest countries. My own, and many other, studies have shown that very modest income transfers, just fractions of 1 per cent of gross national product from the rich to the poor, could enable massive expansions of health services, access to essential medicines, universal primary and secondary education, and financing for the research and development in agricultural technologies to enhance nutritional intake and agricultural productivity.

Second, succeeding in urbanization: making our urban spaces inhabitable areas. We know it can be done. Proof of this is in existence all over the world, though it has not been done in many of the poorest megacities.

Third, strengthening the United Nations and other institutions of global governance, and making sure that we do not destroy our ecosystems.

And fourth, adapting our energy systems to head off the dire risks of highly unpredictable and perhaps disastrously non-linear responses of the global ecosystems to the increasing forcings of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere ■

Jeffrey Sachs is Director of The Earth Institute and Quetelete Professor of Social Sciences at Columbia University.

INVESTING *in the* ENVIRONMENT

DANIEL CHUDNOVSKY says that foreign direct investment by multinational companies may improve the environment in developing countries and calls for vigilance to ensure that this takes place

The effects of foreign direct investment (FDI) on the environment in developing countries are now assessed quite differently from in the past. From being accused of investing in developing countries to take advantage of lax environmental regulations – and hence being responsible for many environmental problems – multinational companies (MNCs) are now increasingly considered as leaders in introducing good environmental management practices and in diffusing environmentally sound technologies. The evidence in support of both arguments is limited, but there is no doubt that many MNCs have the potential to be a more conducive agent for introducing environmentally sound technologies. Their actual environmental management, however, depends on the age of the facilities, the presence of sunk costs, host country environmental regulations and enforcement, the availability of pollution prevention technologies and their own global environmental policies.

The traditional position suggested that 'pollution havens' existed in developing countries to attract more FDI, since MNCs could be interested in escaping from countries with high environmental standards. Despite the popularity of this argument, however, there is little evidence of their existence. Most investment decisions are not made on the basis of environmental criteria. As environmental costs represent less than 2 per cent of the gross domestic product of industrialized countries, it is difficult to imagine that they have any significant weight in location decisions.

Environmentally friendly technology

However, the costs of complying with more stringent environmental regulations might be greater in particular sectors – such as chemicals, oil, steel, mining or cement – and therefore might play a more significant role in the decision-making process. There is a common fear that some developing countries may use lower environmental standards to attract new FDI in these sectors, and gain competitive advantages by lowering standards, or failing to raise them. The new position increasingly argues that FDI can facilitate access to environmentally sound technologies that might improve the host country's environment. It may also lead to some standardization of technologies used across countries and promote the diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies through expanding environmental goods and services.

As some MNCs are pioneers in researching and applying pollution prevention technologies, their affiliates may play a positive role in diffusing them in developing countries. Pollution prevention measures have economic as well as environmental advantages over more conventional 'end-of-pipe' solutions. As many observers testify, pollution prevention technologies may not only be less costly than end-of-pipe treatment, but may in some cases generate additional monetary benefits. So it is no surprise that they have been warmly received in developing countries, where such social problems as poverty or unemployment can only be mitigated in a context of sustained and sustainable economic growth.

The idea is therefore to shift from a corrective to a preventative approach. Developing an innovatory capability to find preventive solutions for pollution problems should be a key element in making this fundamental change and an integral part of any policy framework aimed at developing a national system of innovation.

As MNCs move from end-of-pipe towards pollution prevention environmental management approaches, they may do more than merely use such technologies in their developing country affiliates. They may also influence the environmental management of their affiliates' suppliers, competitors and customers both by setting an example and by introducing their own environmental standards. And they may provide local engineers and technical staff with training in pollution prevention technologies and practices and waste minimization.

Key questions

Key questions are whether MNCs follow the same environmental standards applied in their home country when operating abroad regardless of the host country's own environmental regulations – and whether their developing country affiliates impose those standards on their suppliers and subcontractors. There are several examples of MNCs which do apply the same environmental standards in affiliates operating abroad as at home, but these tend to be corporations operating in several industrial and service branches, rather than those involved in exploiting natural resources. Indeed liberalizing FDI may encourage some MNCs to rely on exporting domestic natural resources without due regard to the limits of sustainability. Even when MNCs do impose codes of conduct on their affiliates abroad, they may not request that their suppliers or subcontractors follow suit. Many MNCs no longer own and operate the plants in which some components of their products are made, so they subcontract production and act as global distributors. This de-coupling has prompted MNCs to assert that they are not responsible for the environmental conditions or wage levels in factories that manufacture parts of their products. Nevertheless, some do impose codes of conduct on their subcontractors and this can have a positive spill-over on local conditions. Such codes of conduct may go beyond environmental issues, to cover also ethical, health and safety standards.

Multinational companies are increasingly considered as leaders in introducing good environmental management practices

Positive spill-over

Environmental regulations in developing countries generally tend to be more lax than in developed ones, and this must be taken into account when studying the relationship between FDI and the environment in the developing world. If MNCs apply higher environmental standards in their operations than are required by local regulations – or even simply comply with such regulations – there may be a positive spill-over not only on the environment and social welfare of the host country, but also on the technological upgrading of national firms and competitors. But this is not always the case, and so special attention should be given to the way MNCs operate, taking into account working conditions and the way natural resources are harvested. MNCs may have a negative impact on social development through 'resource degradation'.

Other factors should also be taken into account when studying the impact of FDI on the environment in developing countries. As income rises, some environmental problems are likely to be attenuated while others increase. Among those likely to improve are problems associated with the lack of infrastructure, such as sewage systems and the supply of drinking water. Those likely to get worse are related to higher levels of development and industrialization, such as industrial emissions, toxic waste and urbanization.

Technology diffusion

In industrialized countries, diffusing pollution prevention technologies plays a crucial role in improving the environmental performance of the production sector without lowering its competitiveness. Special attention should thus be paid to this issue and to the role played by MNCs' affiliates in this respect. There is also a crucial need to develop the knowledge and expertise to handle technological change among local firms so as to take advantage of environmental spill-overs from MNCs' affiliates and to accomplish the organizational changes required if they are to move towards pollution prevention technologies ■

Daniel Chudnovsky is Professor of International Business and Development Economics at the University of San Andrés and Director of the Centro de Investigaciones para la Transformación (CENIT), Argentina.

Letter from the President of the Kyrgyz Republic

Dear Reader

I would like to draw your attention to the Bishkek Mountain Platform, the concluding document of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit. Eminent politicians, independent experts and people of world renown have been involved in the development and drafting of this document over the course of this entire year.

I feel that this document is a good mechanism for international partnership and will be instrumental in promoting sustainable development in mountain regions in the 21st century. It will enable all of us to implement the ideas and thoughts we have in common and which have been put forward at various international and regional fora, including the Bishkek Summit.

The Platform has drawn on the rich material and extensive experience available through the international community and individuals involved in sustainable mountain development in recent years. The Platform expresses concepts and recommendations on the sustainable development of the world community as a whole and mountain regions in particular.

I am sure this will be a pivotal document, marking out a sure path in your ongoing activity and uniting all like-minded people in the area of mountain policy.

With best wishes

A. Akaev

President of the Kyrgyz Republic

Hua Mao Jun / XFT Typhoon

BISHKEK MOUNTAIN PLATFORM

1. Objectives

The Bishkek Mountain Platform is an outcome of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, the culminating global event of the International Year of Mountains 2002. The objective of the Platform is to continue with existing initiatives and to develop substantive efforts beyond the Year by mobilizing resources, giving orientation and guidance, and promoting synergies. In particular, it will provide a framework for stakeholders and others to contribute to sustainable development in the world's mountain regions. It will enable them to act together at all levels from local to global to improve the livelihoods of mountain people, to protect mountain ecosystems and to use mountain resources more wisely. The Platform should, furthermore, serve as a contribution to debate in the General Assembly of the United Nations and to the achievement of the Millennium Goals.

2. Background

The Bishkek Mountain Platform builds on the rich experience embodied in documents on sustainable mountain development, beginning with Chapter 13, 'Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development', of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The ensuing process culminated in the International Year of Mountains, which was initiated by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The objectives of the Year are to promote the conservation and sustainable development of mountain regions, thereby ensuring the well-being of mountain and lowland communities. In preparation for, and during, the Year, many meetings on different aspects of sustainable mountain

development have been held, and their resolutions and declarations have also contributed to the Platform. A series of thematic papers, prepared for the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit by international specialists and developed further through electronic consultations, have also contributed to the Platform. Furthermore, it takes into consideration the recommendations of paragraph 40 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002.

3. Challenges

Mountain areas cover 24 per cent of the Earth's land surface and host 12 per cent of its people. Mountains provide vital resources for both mountain and lowland people, including freshwater for at least half of humanity, critical reserves of biodiversity, food, forests and minerals. They are culturally rich and provide places for the physical and spiritual recreation of the inhabitants of our increasingly urbanized planet.

The people of mountain areas face major challenges. About half of the world's approximately 700 million mountain inhabitants are vulnerable to food shortages and chronic malnutrition. Mountain people, particularly disadvantaged groups such as women and children, suffer more than others from the unequal distribution of assets and from conflicts.

Policy decisions influencing the use of mountain resources are generally made in centres of power far from mountain communities, which are often politically marginalized and receive inadequate compensation for mountain resources, services and products. Mountain ecosystems are exceedingly diverse but fragile because of their steep slopes, altitude and extreme landscapes. Many of these ecosystems are being degraded because farmers are forced to apply unsustainable agricultural practices and by inappropriate development.

Climate change, natural hazards and other forces also threaten the complex webs of life that mountains support. The consequences of poverty and environmental degradation reach far beyond mountain communities, through war, terrorism, refugee movements, migration, loss of human potential, drought, famine, and escalating numbers of

UNEP-WCMC's Mountain Watch provides a new map-based synthesis of environmental change and its implications for sustainable development in mountain regions

landslides, mudslides, catastrophic floods and other natural disasters in highlands and lowlands. Moreover, the rapid melting of mountain glaciers and degradation of watersheds is reducing the availability of life-sustaining water and increasing the potential of conflict over dwindling supplies.

4. Declaration

We, the participants in the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, the culminating global event of the International Year of Mountains, pledge our long-term commitment and determination to achieving the goals of sustainable development in mountain areas. We are committed to protecting the Earth's mountain ecosystems, reducing poverty and food insecurity in mountain areas, promoting peace and economic equity, and providing support for current and future generations of mountain people – women and men, girls and boys – to create the conditions in which they can shape their own goals and aspirations.

5. Guiding principles

We support participatory, multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary, eco-regional, decentralized and long-term approaches that respect the principles of subsidiarity, human diversity, human rights, gender equity and the environment. We value and build upon both indigenous and scientific information and knowledge.

6. Framework for action

We call on the United Nations and its organizations, states, international and non-governmental organizations and businesses, grassroots organizations, scientists and individuals to jointly invest their resources in mountain areas. We also call on financial institutions, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to continue and increase their support. It will take all of us, working in partnership, to achieve our goals. We see this framework as guidance for coming decades, recognizing that the details will be developed by partners.

6.1. Actions at the international level

UN resolution: We suggest that the International Year of Mountains Focus Group of the United Nations develop a UN resolution on sustainable development in mountain regions. The resolution might provide guidance for the United Nations and its agencies to develop policies and programmes in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Platform, and invite further cooperation and enhancement of actions in mountain regions worldwide. Furthermore, we encourage the Focus Group to highlight the vital inter-relationships between mountains and freshwater resources, particularly in the context of the International Year of Freshwater 2003, and to consider the establishment of a World Mountain Day.

International partnership: We support the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, a 'type 2' outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002. We welcome the offer of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to host the secretariat of the Partnership and bring the Inter-Agency Working Group on Mountains to its service. We call on UNEP to ensure environmentally sound management in ▸

The Platform will provide a framework for stakeholders and others to contribute to sustainable development in the world's mountain regions

mountain regions, in particular in developing countries, by strengthening environmental networking and assessments, facilitating regional agreements and encouraging public/private-sector cooperation. We count on the continuing and increasing involvement of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations University (UNU), other UN agencies, multilateral development banks, other international organizations and states.

The structure and working modalities will be further elaborated to ensure an effective Partnership. We invite interested organizations and countries to join the Partnership and ensure its financial sustainability.

We welcome the proposal to create, within the context of the Partnership, an international Network of Developing Mountain States and Regions, and support the establishment of a working group for its further elaboration.

Capacity development: We believe that capacity development at all levels is essential to improve the competence of mountain stakeholders and to enhance understanding of mountain processes, problems, needs, opportunities and assets. This should involve all sectors of education, non-governmental organizations, governments, decision-makers and international agencies.

Science and technology: We invite the scientific community and its funding agencies, at international and national levels, to promote international partnerships and programmes of research, monitoring and early warning in support of sustainable development in mountain regions. We particularly emphasize that initiatives should focus on biophysical as well as political, social, economic and cultural aspects, and that they apply disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, thereby contributing to integrated understanding of problems and opportunities for sustainable mountain development.

6.2. Actions at the regional (supranational) level

Regional focus: We are convinced that transboundary mountain regions have specific environmental, social, political, cultural and economic characteristics and potential for development and therefore require specific approaches and resources.

Regional cooperation: We urge that development and conservation in transboundary mountain regions and between upstream and downstream stakeholders be coordinated between all partners affected or involved.

Regional agreements: We support formal instruments such as charters, conventions and integrated policies to foster international cooperation between states sharing mountain areas.

6.3. Actions at the national level

Governance: We call upon national governments to apply the principle of subsidiarity by delegating political decisions to the lowest possible level of decision-making, from national to subnational to community, corporate and private responsibilities.

Policy advocacy: We invite national governments to develop legislation, policies and procedures in favour of their mountain areas, particularly those that are marginalized in terms of economic and social development, and to set their national priorities accordingly. We also invite political parties and governments to become involved with international initiatives, provided that these are accepted at the local level.

Mountain-specific data: We recognize that the lack of spatially disaggregated socio-economic and environmental data hampers the recognition and specific analysis of mountain livelihood issues. We encourage governments to produce, publish and use mountain-specific data to improve policies for sustainable mountain development, especially in relation to dominant lowland economies.

Investment and compensation mechanisms: We are convinced that economic disparities between mountains and their surrounding areas can be reduced through investment and other means. We encourage governments to introduce compensation mechanisms for goods and services provided by mountain communities, enterprises or natural and cultural landscapes through negotiations between affected people and beneficiaries.

Providing access: We recognize that the physical nature of mountain regions hinders access in many ways. In particular, we call upon governments to use information and communications technologies to bring benefits to mountain people.

We call upon governments to use information and communications technologies to bring benefits to mountain people

6.4. Actions at the local level

Local stewardship: We support local governance and ownership of resources, individual freedom, cultural self-determination, and traditional belief systems, which lie at the core of sustainable development in mountain areas, especially where the economic influence of external forces is high.

Local development: We urge all stakeholders to ensure that local livelihoods are improved, economic enterpreneurship is fostered and that environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources is guaranteed. External partners should seek to support local initiatives when requested to do so. ■

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger: the stated overall goal is to reduce the proportion of people living on less than $1 a day to half the 1990 level by 2015 – from 29 per cent of all people in low and middle income economies to 14.5 per cent. If achieved, this would reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty to 890 million (or to 750 million if growth stays on track).
- To achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Build a global partnership for development

'You can't breathe money'

says STEVEN SEAGAL

Big business is taking over the world, believes Steven Seagal, the Hollywood actor. He says the most important environmental issue is to 'separate the relationship' between 'big government and big business in the aspect of them being able to buy and support each other so that our environment does not mean anything any more'.

The actor, who has produced and starred in two action movies with an environmental theme – *On Deadly Ground* in 1994, and *Fire Down Below* three years later – adds that he is 'very active in doing what I can to protect the environment'.

'I am the only actor in the history of Hollywood that I know that has done two major motion pictures that are devoted to the environment,' he says. 'I found them both and rewrote them both and shaped them both and made them both in hopes that I could do something to make the world a better place and bring people's awareness about the environment to a higher level.'

Meanwhile, outside his work, he has also campaigned with lawyers and environmentalists over specific projects. 'I think that I have shut down more toxic waste plants and different dangerous polluters than just about anyone else. I did it by exposing people, flying in to make speeches to educate people and getting people to file lawsuits. It's a never ending battle and I will not stop fighting.'

Globalization in itself is not the problem, he believes. 'It's fine for big business to merge and get bigger, as long as they can start to realize that you can't breathe money, you can't drink money and you can't eat money.

'In the end they are going to trade off having a lot of money for selling themselves and their children's future down the river to the point where the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat is all so tainted that you are going to have nothing but cancer in everyone and the life span will go down and all of the modern medicine in the world won't be able to help them.

'My desire and my dream is somehow to be able to circumvent big business so that they cannot buy the government and therefore buy legislation. We have to be able somehow to increase the awareness of people so that they are not duped by candidates running for electoral positions.'

Steven Seagal was born in Detroit – 'motor city, which gives you good reason to have concern for the environment as a child' – and has made 18 films in a career spanning more than 20 years. In *On Deadly Ground* – which he says is recognized as 'the most important environmental film ever made in the history of Hollywood' – his character defeats a corrupt oil executive who is trying to steal Inuit land to pollute it with chemical waste; the film ends with a speech by Seagal on environmental protection. *Fire Down Below* features the dumping of toxic waste in abandoned coal mines in Appalachia.

The actor has come under criticism for the violence in his films, but he rejects this as 'stupid'. He says: 'people love to live vicariously through someone who can, even in fantasy, let the bad guys get their come-uppance. They are good fun, they bring people a lot of joy and oftentimes also I get a message in there.'

GL

WE WILL SUCCEED

Safura Zavaran Hoseini

In the name of Allah who created my country, Iran – a country of mountains, fields and seas – full of natural resources, oil and other minerals that have brought us great wealth and comfort!

I am one girl amongst millions who were part of our country's population explosion. My generation faces many problems – overpopulation, unemployment, over-use of natural resources and many other things. As in many other countries around the world, the poverty rate and the level of social welfare are a concern. Resources are declining while the need for them is increasing.

Lack of wisdom

For me, the reasons are cultural poverty, lack of information and knowledge, and the search for economic profits. We collectively lack wisdom in dealing with nature. This is a new phenomenon. I know people from previous generations who respected nature. They had trust and belief in living and dealing with nature – considering old trees, for example, as holy creatures. Cutting and harming them was not allowed and offenders were punished.

What has happened to us? I am the child of a city dweller. My parents came to the city along with millions of others to seek wealth. They did not teach me how to preserve our culture or our environment, or how to care for nature. Yet our land is still well filled with resources. Maybe my parents had no choice. They were so busy with politics, revolution, war, rebuilding. They had no time to think about the environment or collect knowledge about it and its resources. Maybe they never fully recognized its importance – its centrality to all our lives and future

Nature's disciplines

In my country there are people – particularly young ones – who care about the environment and understand the disciplines of living within the constraints of nature. We try to raise environmental awareness amongst others. As we trade with others and meet each other over the Internet, we realize that we are part of a growing generation around the world dedicated to conserving the natural resources with which Allah has blessed us. One day we will succeed. It may take a long time, but finally, my generation – the first global generation – will fully understand the value of nature. We will decrease poverty in our country while at the same time restoring, healing and conserving our beautiful environment. We will achieve sustainable development ■

Safura Zavaran Hoseini is a First-year student of Environmental Engineering in Tehran University and Member of Peace Child International's Iranian affiliate, the Green Front of Iran.